

of mankind, that of a friend is the most desirable. Prodigality may deprive us of our riches, a reverse of fortune may tumble the most powerful into adversity; but death alone can deprive us of a friend: a friend is an acquisition that no human power can deprive us of: if you can but find one friend in the course of your life, you will find a most valuable treasure. I desire, also, my son, that you will visit every part of the world; travelling will furnish you with experience; the more we see of mankind, the better we are qualified to live amongst them. The world is a large volume, that will instruct those who know how to read in it. It is a faithful mirror, that presents to our view those objects that will give us instruction. Go, my son, but remember in your voyage to make the acquisition of a true friend. For this you may sacrifice the most valuable articles you possess.

The young man took his leave of his father and went to visit a country at a small distance from his own; where he continued but a short time and then returned to his father.

"I am amazed, my son, said the old gentleman, that you should make so speedy a return."—"You commanded me, replied the son to go in search of a friend, and I have found fifty of them. who are models of the most perfect friendship."

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"My son, replied the merchant, trifle with a name so sacred; do you what the Persian poet said upon this: *Speak not in favour of your friend, till you have proved him.* 'Tis an extraordinary title, and most of those who pretend to it, wear only the mask of friendship, and resemble a cloud that is dispersed by the smallest rays of the sun; they behave to those whom they pretend to esteem, as a flask of wine; so long as it contains any of the enchanting liquor, they are embraced with ardor, but as soon as it is empty, it is thrown under the table: I am sure, that the friends, whom you have mentioned, are not of this opinion of friendship, but resemble to those I have been speaking of."

"Father, replied the young man, those suspicions are unjust: those whom I have mentioned as my friends, are such as would sacrifice to my adversity."

"I have lived seventy years, replied the merchant, I have experienced good and bad fortune, and, in such a long course of life, I have hardly been able to find a friend. How happens it, that at your age, and in so short a time, you should have found fifty? Learn of me the knowledge of friendship."

The merchant then killed a sheep, and cut it into a bag, and besmeared the bag with the blood of the sheep.